for the real widower to marry a girl capable of adding a number of sons to the family. Thus, provided the previous wife's funeral has been handled in this manner, it is considered ethical for the widower to marry a putative virgin from another family of the gentry.

Generally all of the headmen and headmen's regular assistants belong to the gentry; and during the last century the British officials normally appointed their manegars and karnams (i.e. headmen and accountants) from among the gentry too (Grigg 1880: 366).

In keeping with the image of his greater honor, wisdom and prestige, a member of the gentry receives rather different treatment than an ordinary man at the hands of the Badaga judicial council. Traditional Badaga law holds the individual responsible for his acts, and treats him as the offender if he is found guilty of some crime. Among the gentry, on the other hand, the head of the family is responsible for the acts of all members of his family even though he may know nothing about them. This was vividly illustrated by a case in 1963, which I will quote from my field-notes.

"Bejji is the traditional headman of a Badaga hamlet and, as he is the eldest of several brothers, he is also head of his family, which is considered a gentry family. One day he met his friend Lingan, a prominent elder from the neighboring hamlet. They were on a footpath in the fields belonging to Lingan's people. Without any prior explanation or greeting, Lingan abused Bejji roundly for his despicable behavior. Bejji was taken aback, and questioned him about the meaning of this outburst. He thus learned that one of his brothers had just kicked a Tamilian boy employed by the neighboring hamlet to look after their cattle. Normally Lingan would not have concerned himself with a minor hurt done to a non-Badaga in his hamlet; but in this case, because the boy was employed by the hamlet

159 -565 •672 592 (558) (627) as a whole, the implication of the kick was that it was a direct insult to Lingan's entire hamlet. And because the man who had given the kick was a member of the gentry, the insult was considered to have come from his entire family. Knowing all this, Lingan felt justified in making the attack on his friend. Belli recognized this fact and did not try to evade the implication; for to do so might bring his status as a member of the gentry into question. Belli therefore meekly apologized for his brother's behavior and, as he is a headman himself, thereupon fined himself four annas (5¢ U.S.) without calling any council to discuss the incident. He immediately handed the sum over to Lingan; but later gave his brother a stern lecture about his indiscretion."

This case makes a good illustration for the Badaga proverb, "The prestige of a great man can depend on a small boy." The people expect more honorable, even exemplary, behavior from the gentry than from others; and this expectation applies as much to younger members of the gentry as to their elders. The rule making the head of a gentry family responsible for the behavior of all its members thus constrains the younger members to behave in a way that will not dishonor the family head and thus the family reputation. If younger sons err seriously, they are likely to be disinherited and lose the claim to the status of gentry.

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During the hearing of disputes a council is normally confronted with contradictory evidence. Whenever this happens they tend to evaluate the evidence not only in terms of any sort of abstract logical consistency, but also with respect to the social status of the people presenting the evidence. The rules for evaluating contradictory evidence are therefore, I was told, that a headman should be believed before any other man, a higher-level (e.g. divisional) headman before a lower-level one, a man should be believed before a woman, a member of the gentry or

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